DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 214 CE 066 810

TITLE	Effective Performance Appraisals: Communicating in Health Care Settings. An Offering of Step Ahead: A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication.
INSTITUTION	New Mexico State Univ., Las Cruces. Dept. of English.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. National Workplace Literacy Program.
PUB DATE	15 Jan 93
CONTRACT	V198A20233
NOTE	46p.; For related documents, see ED 343 022-026 and CE 066 809-815. The project's other partners were the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and seven hospitals within New Mexico.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; Allied Health Occupations Education; *Communication Skills; Curriculum Guides; *Hospital Personnel; Instructional Materials; Job Performance; Learning Activities; Lesson Plans; Literacy Education; *Personnel Evaluation; *Supervisory Training; Teaching Guides
IDENTIFIERS	*Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

This course in supervisory performance appraisal skills developed especially for hospital employees is designed to be taught onsite and to complement a hospital's other training and staff development efforts. The topical focus is workplace communication. The course is designed as a 6-hour workshop with two 3-hour sessions or one long session. The curriculum guide consists of a list of course goals, appraisal scenarios, and informational materials, activities, and exercises for six topics: understanding the purposes for appraisal; understanding the appraisal process; establishing goals and objectives; needs, motivation, and feedback; appraisal problems; and appraisals: putting it all together. The teacher's guide explains the philosophy of the course. It lists course goals (including participant role, instructor role, and evaluation) and offers sample lesson plans. Each lesson plan has a brief narrative description of class activities and goals and a time plan. Each plan assumes a 3-hour class session and team-teaching. The teacher's guide also describes how teachers can adapt the course to make it more work-related and more responsive to different audiences. Suggestions for recordkeeping conclude the guide. (YLB)

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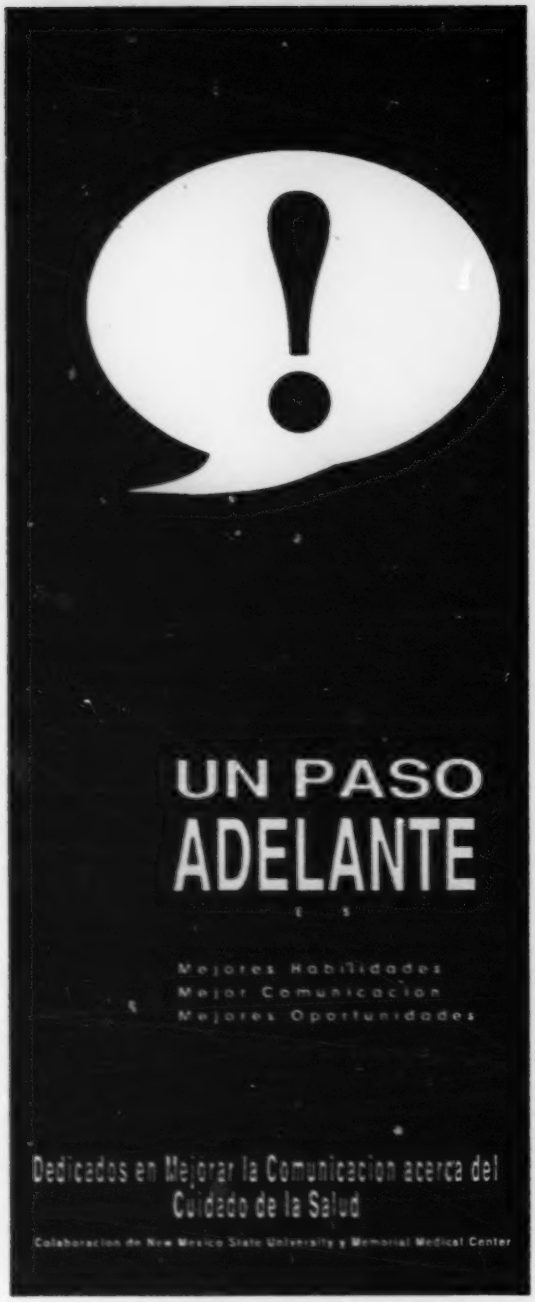
UN PASO
ADELANTE
Mejores Habilidades
Mejor Comunicacion
Mejores Oportunidades
Dedicados en Mejorar la Comunicacion acerca del Cuidado de la Salud
Colaboracion de New Mexico State University y Memorial Medical Center

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presents

Effective Performance Appraisals

Communicating in Health Care Settings

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Effective Performance Appraisals

An offering of Step *Ahead:*

A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication

Sponsored by

The Hospitals of New Mexico
and
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New Mexico State University

1/15/93

EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS was developed by **Step *Ahead***: A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication. **Step *Ahead*** is funded in large part by the U. S. Department of Education as a National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project. Our other partners include The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and seventeen hospitals within New Mexico.

Step *Ahead* brings short courses and on-site tutoring to hospitals. Our training project helps health care workers improve their job-related communication and literacy skills. As a demonstration project, we are eager to share our materials with others who are engaged in not-for-profit literacy work. If you would like to use our materials, please write for permission to:

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our partner organizations and especially wish to thank our many students who told us it really did make a difference.

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Dr. Stephen A. Bernhardt and Dr. Paul R. Meyer, Co-Directors

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Effective Performance Appraisals
Course Goals

At the end of this course, participants should:

- understand the purposes of the appraisals
- feel more comfortable with the appraisal process
- be able to set goals and objectives for oneself and others
- be able to give and take effective performance feedback
- be able to address both positive and negative issues during the appraisal process

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Points to Remember

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Appraisal Scenarios

What would you do in each of the cases below if you were the supervisor? How and when would the performance appraisal process enter in? Write a short response indicating how you would handle each situation.

1. You have an employee who is consistently late to work. This is disruptive for co-workers because someone has to cover for the employee. This affects the daycare situation, the car-pooling arrangements, and the scheduled training of some of your other employees. In addition, morale is beginning to suffer. You've spoken about it several times, but the problem persists.

2. You have received several complaints about the way patients are treated by one of your employees. The complaints include statements such as "The employee is rude" and "The employee has the appearance of not caring about others. " You are becoming concerned about the well-being of the patients as well as your department.

3. An employee in your department does not seem to rank priorities the way they should be. While important jobs are not being done, jobs of lesser significance are taken care of without hesitation.

4. You have a bright employee who seems to have a morale problem. She doesn't do a bad job, but she also never shows any initiative in taking on responsibilities or solving problems. She just punches in and out, and she usually has a glum expression.

Purposes for Appraisals: Individual, Supervisor, Organization

Why do we do performance appraisals? Obviously, for several reasons. Because they have sometimes competing and sometimes overlapping purposes, problems tend to arise.

Appraising work performance is a complex act. In this exercise, think about the appraisal from three points of view: individual, supervisor, and organization.

What purposes do appraisals serve to the **Individuals** being evaluated?

-
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-

What purposes do appraisals serve to the **Supervisors** doing the evaluation?

-
-
-
-

What purposes do appraisals serve to the **Organization**?

-
-
-
-

Giving vs. Receiving

What differences do you see between the responsibilities of the supervisor who gives an appraisal and the responsibilities of the employee who receives it?

What responsibilities are shared on both sides?

List below those responsibilities that are different, and then list those that are shared

GIVER	RECEIVER

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES:

Flowcharting the Appraisal Process

Every organization, and often each department within the organization, has its own process for doing performance appraisals. Take a few minutes to draft a flowchart which best describes the process that is followed in your hospital or your department. Chart the process to show each step in the yearly appraisal process.

The Appraisal Process: Policy vs. Reality

The statements on the left might represent how the organization views the appraisal process. In the column on the right, indicate how the process works in practice. Write "same" or "usually" when the policy matches reality.

Policy	Reality
Employees work toward realistic goals.	
The process helps people develop to their potential.	
The process leads to continual improvement.	
The process provides a means for advancement.	
The process is fair and objective.	
Supervisors and employees know when the process is working.	
Supervisors and employees agree on the purposes and the process.	
Supervisors keep notes during the year to help them evaluate employees on an on-going basis.	
When the appraisals are delivered, there is a good cooperative team spirit.	
People are rewarded for good performance.	

Establishing Goals and Objectives

During appraisal, there are questions most employees expect to have answered:

- How am I doing?
- What can I do to improve?
- Do I have a chance for advancement?
- What will be expected of me before the next review?
- How will my work be evaluated during that time?
- What kind of help or attention can I expect from my supervisor?

As you may notice, most of these questions address the future. As a supervisor, you must be prepared to work with your employees to establish goals and objectives for the future and establish a plan for action. You want to have a good idea of past performance **before** you meet with your employee to address these questions, and you probably want to think about what goals might be appropriate for your employee.

If the appraisal process is to be successful, however, you should plan on involving the employee in the discussion and negotiation of goals and objectives. You want to get buy-in from the employee. You are working for a shared, collaborative sense of what needs to be done. And most people will not buy into a plan unless they help formulate it.

One approach which may be useful when addressing goals and objectives may be the R-A-P Review Model:

- *R*eview the past (goals which were set during the last appraisal, and whether they were met)
- *A*nalyze the present (do existing goals need to remain? do new goals need to be added?), and
- *P*lan the future (set new goals and develop objectives).

This model allows the supervisor to prepare to meet with the employee and to successfully have those often-asked questions answered. At appraisal time, the model will also allow the supervisor and the employee to concentrate on the appraisal for the upcoming year.

Occasionally, the supervisor must identify substandard performance and work with the employee toward improvement. Once the employee understands that the planned goals can benefit him as well as the organization, it is time to move on to establishing a clear set of goals and the objectives for meeting those goals in the coming year.

Keep in mind that the objectives you and your employee will set should involve first maintaining or improving the performance an employee is demonstrating and secondly, promoting growth and possible opportunities for advancement for the employee and the organization.

Defining Goals and Objectives

Goals are frequently distinguished from objectives:

Goals are broad statements of purpose: "improve customer service" or "increase efficiency of night crew"

Objectives are specific, measurable outcome statements: "decrease slips and falls on 2W by 20% by December 15" or "arrive at work on time 95% of time over next six months"

To ensure that your goals and objectives are appropriate and your employee feels you are taking the review process seriously, they must be stated clearly. A clear **goal** reflects the organization's mission and values. Goals are something to aim toward and to guide action:

- Improve customer service
- Expedite billing processes
- Implement continuous operations improvement
- Make patient feel welcome and comfortable
- Reduce paperwork burdens
- Be a positive force in the community

Once goals have been established, the objectives for meeting these goals can be defined.

A good **objective** is short and precise and must be

Specific (not vague) It must be viewed by the employee as specific to the evaluation of performance (not the individual). Compare "You should do a better job" with "You should work toward having eighty percent of all rooms pass inspection the first time."

Measurable. If there is no way to measure the outcome of an objective, neither the employee nor the supervisor can evaluate progress. Can you count it, measure it, compare it, check it off, or answer *yes* or *no*? Will you know it has been done? How?

Attainable. Objectives must assess skills and abilities as they relate to the employee's current duties and responsibilities. The most effective objectives are those that are written with an expectation that is slightly beyond what the employee has accomplished before, thus providing a challenge and an opportunity for the employee to grow.

Evaluating Objectives

Evaluate the following objectives. Are they Specific, Measurable and Attainable? If not, rewrite them to make them fit the requirements.

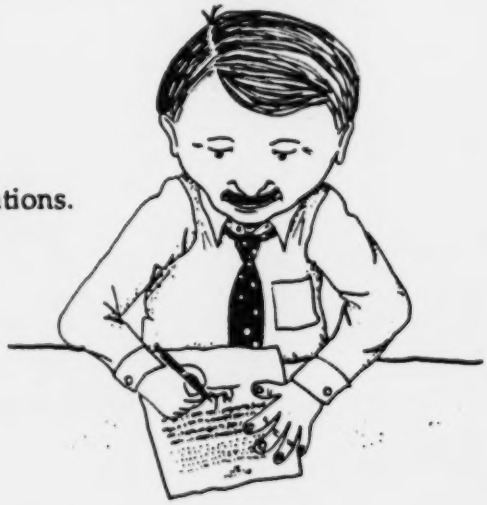
S M A

___ ___ ___ 1. Write better incident reports.

___ ___ ___ 2. Reduce the number of complaints about patient billing.

___ ___ ___ 3. Take three classes related to effective management in the next two years.

___ ___ ___ 4. Improve staff/patient relations.



___ ___ ___ 5. Establish priorities.

___ ___ ___ 6. Conduct at least one staff meeting per month.

___ ___ ___ 7. Be on time more often.

Moving from Needs Statements to Objectives

Often the appraisal process identifies opportunities for improvement. Within some workplaces, for example, "developmental needs" are noted. If we look at these developmental needs as opportunities for improvement, we must also have some action plans, or clear, attainable objectives that the employee can work toward. Remember that the objectives should be specific, measurable, and attainable outcome statements.

For each opportunity for development on the left side, write an appropriate objective on the right.

Opportunity for Improvement	Objective
1. Work more closely with fellow employees.	
2. Work on having a greater number of rooms that pass inspection.	
3. Have faster turn-around time.	
4. Learn more procedures within the office.	
5. Keep better track of work orders.	
6. Establish priorities within my unit.	
7. Be more responsive to patients.	
8. Learn more about my job.	
9. Improve teamwork.	

Motivating Employees

As a supervisor, one of your goals should be that your employees are satisfied on the job. How can you keep employees satisfied and motivate them to perform at or beyond your level of expectation? When we motivate our employees we want to get them to do something and keep doing it.

Some needs are **extrinsic**: they come from outside the individual (pay, time off, praise, promotions, awards). Other needs are **intrinsic**: they come from inside the individual (good feelings, satisfaction, teamwork, sense of accomplishment, becoming a leader).

Some typical needs are listed below. Rank order them as you see their importance. Put a 1 by the most important need, a 2 by the second most important, and so on. Add others that you feel are important at the bottom and rank them too.

___ People need to feel they are contributing to an important effort.

___ People need to feel well-liked and respected as individuals.

___ People need to feel that their good work is recognized and appreciated.

___ People need to be treated fairly.

___ People need to be given the authority to make decisions and solve problems.

___ People need feedback to help them do a better job.

___ People need to be paid at a competitive rate.

___ People need to find a balance between family/personal life and work life.

___ People need to feel like they are an important member of the team or group.

___ People need to feel that they are helping or caring for other.

___ People need to feel they are learning new skills and information.

___ People need to advance to new positions.

___

___

From Needs to Motivation

As you can see from the rankings above, everybody has different needs and priorities. If you understand your employees' needs and meet those needs, you will motivate them. Listed below are six ways to motivate employees to do their best.

- **Be specific about what you want done and how you want it done. Ask for performance in specific ways.** Employees will generally respond positively to clear, specific directions. But be open to suggestions of better or more efficient ways to do things. Otherwise, there is no way for an employee to demonstrate creativity or individuality.

- **Offer praise and positive reinforcement for good work and for specific improvements.** Remember, nothing succeeds like success. When employees are successful, praise them for it and encourage them to continue.

- **Treat your employees like real people, demonstrating that you trust them and respect their individuality.** Building real relationships will help you to understand them and to know what their needs are.

- **Bring your people into the decision-making process. If you tell them what has to be done and listen to their suggestions or opinions before you tell them how to do it, they will be much more cooperative.** Even if they end up doing it your way, they will feel that their ideas have been listened to. And you may find some really good suggestions that you hadn't thought of.

- **Show your people what you want.** Modeling expected behavior is one of the most effective ways to get improved performance. Actions really do speak louder than words. If you demonstrate that you are committed to quality, are able to meet deadlines, and feel that your job is important, your employees will notice and respond.

- **Let the employee know when performance is not meeting the standards you have set.** If you ask for performance and praise it when you get it, you must also acknowledge when you don't get it. This may take the form of coaching to show what you want, or it may be as strong as a reprimand or discipline. Whatever it is, it shows that you are asking for a commitment to high standards.

Working with Needs and Expectations

Remember, your employees will live up (or down) to your expectations. If you let them know that you have high expectations, they will generally work to meet those expectations. On the other hand, if they feel that you don't have confidence in them and don't expect them to be able to handle the job, they will meet that expectation too. If you can ask them to do a little more than they have done before, they will feel challenged, they will have an opportunity to grow, and they will feel a real sense of accomplishment when they get the job done. Not only will you will have a confident and motivated employee who is ready and eager to tackle the next challenge, you will have an employee who has developed an identification with the job and who is ready to move on to a stronger commitment toward the hospital.

Can you identify what motivates you and gives you job satisfaction?

Can you identify some ways in which you can increase motivation among your employees?

Performance Appraisal and Quality Initiatives

Many businesses today, and health care is no exception, are moving to implement principles that together define a "Quality" workplace. Here are some of the basic principles that an organization must work toward as they implement a quality program. As you read each, imagine what the relation might be between performance appraisals and quality. Make a note on your thoughts after each item.

1. Always satisfy the customer (the client or the patient and their families).

2. Provide a work environment that encourages all employees to take pride in their own work.

3. Continuously improve every aspect of planning, operations, and service.

4. Eliminate barriers that add cost, cause rework, or add needless complexity.

5. Encourage all employees to seek professional development through education and training.

6. Share decision making and responsibility at all levels, especially among the front line workers who know best what works and what can be improved.

7. Make sure all employees clearly understand their jobs, responsibilities, and individual roles in creating quality health care.

8. Seek supervisory and management practices that focus on the improvement of the systems in which people work.

9. Use statistical or quantitative measures to gauge performance (budgets, numerical measures, statistical process control, data, records).

10. Create an atmosphere of trust, openness, integrity, and mutual respect.

11. Develop leadership.

Performance Appraisals and Pay Issues

Pay for Performance is one way of structuring the evaluation process. Under another name, it is a merit system, where strong job performance leads directly to increased pay. Such systems often use a numerical ranking on different performance categories and then crank the numbers through some sort of formula to determine how much of the available raise money each employee gets.

One major problem with such systems arises during periods of scarce resources. Employees who expect their performance to be directly tied to pay raises are difficult to motivate when there's no money for raises. Hospitals tend to have good years and bad, and they are subject to economic forces beyond their control. Our society is entering a period when we can expect increasing pressures from the government to control health care costs, and these pressures will cause hospitals to work with lean budgets.

The choice is to move from pay for performance toward systems that rely on other sources of motivation. What are some ways to do this? What should be the strategy? Are there good ways to motivate employees and to get their participation in performance evaluation that is not based on raises? List some strategies below:

- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑

Providing Feedback

Providing feedback to your employees can be a good motivator. The performance appraisal should never hold any surprises for the employee or the supervisor. How can you make sure this will be true for you?

Communicate during the year about how people are doing, especially by offering positive feedback. The most frequent complaint we hear is that no one recognizes a job well done. Some supervisors may feel it is obvious to their employees when a job is well done and nothing needs to be said. But it is not obvious and does need to be said. Make it a practice to provide positive, immediate feedback. A brief oral comment works well, and a short written note is even more powerful. If you have never written a short note commending performance, try it. It is a powerful tool. It provides **reinforcement** for those behaviors you wish to encourage.

Throughout the year the supervisor should provide feedback to her employees. Ideally, scheduling short meetings with your subordinates throughout the year for the purpose of providing feedback helps to keep everyone on target. Realistically, however, that may not be possible, especially when a supervisor is in charge of many employees. But you can provide feedback just by writing a short note to the employee or giving the employee a comment in passing and noting it for future reference during the actual appraisal process.

Types of Feedback

Feedback can include positive information, it can be neutral where no judgment is involved, or it can address and discuss negatives. **Positive feedback** is always welcome. It can provide the motivation necessary for an employee to continue to do a good job and to look for new areas to excel. **Neutral feedback** can also be useful: "I've noticed some tension between you and Elaine concerning the billing system." This is a neutral statement because no immediate action is required. But it does let the employee know that you are aware of a potential problem and you are giving the employee an opportunity to discuss the situation. **Negative feedback**, of course, is telling an employee that he is not doing something as well as you believe he can. Although uncomfortable, negative feedback is as important to the individual and the organization as positive feedback.

Timing

Timing is central to feedback. If feedback is provided throughout the year, feelings of fear that are often associated with the appraisal can be lessened. In addition, if you have provided feedback and prepared your goals and objectives ahead of time, there should be no reason for surprises during the actual performance appraisal. However, the ways in which you provide feedback can be as important as the feedback itself. Giving feedback to someone is giving the

other person an implicit message that you have set a goal (or goals) you want met.

Employees are going to welcome good feedback, but they may become defensive when receiving feedback that they perceive questions their abilities. This is normal, so be prepared. You are providing your employee with some important information and showing her you care about her performance. You are also giving the employee time to improve her performance or to show you that she can continue to keep doing a good job. Remember, this is feedback and not a performance appraisal.

Practice

It takes practice to give feedback. As you return to your work setting, try offering either positive, neutral, or negative feedback to people as the occasion arises. Make a real effort to find something to praise in someone's work. Write a short note for someone's appraisal file. See if a neutral comment can initiate discussion and bring about a needed change.

How do you provide feedback? What's your style?

What are some characteristics of bad feedback?

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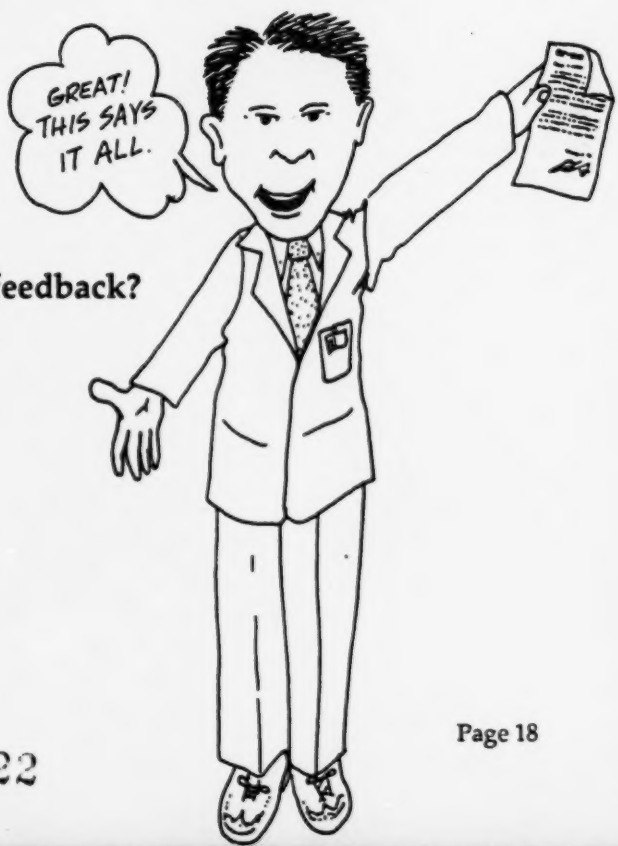
3.



What are some characteristics of good feedback?

1.

2.

3.

Appraisal Problems

Health care is a competitive service industry. The emphasis and pressures placed on supervisors to conduct performance appraisals is increasing. Unless the supervisor has established a clear set of guidelines to follow throughout the year, she is not going to be completely prepared for the appraisal process when it occurs. The result is that problems begin to develop with the appraisal as it is conducted. Take a few minutes to write down what problems you have encountered either as giver or receiver of an appraisal.

GIVER	RECEIVER

Common Problems

If you have worked during the year to communicate with your employees by providing feedback and motivating them, the actual performance appraisal should be a much less burdensome process for each of you. However, there are still some behaviors you want to be aware of so that you can avoid them.

Withholding Negative Information to Avoid Hassle

Too often, supervisors have a tendency to give employees overall, satisfactory ratings on their appraisals, even though an unsatisfactory rating may be needed. A supervisor may want to give positive feedback instead of negative, may feel insecure in his own position, or may lack understanding about why the appraisal is being conducted.

It is important to note that an accurate, negative appraisal can help the hospital more than an inaccurate, positive appraisal. The appraisal process will suffer if a supervisor is reluctant to face a conflict that might arise as a result of a negative appraisal. Negative feedback and positive feedback can be used together to improve the performance of an employee. When doing so, it is important, however, not to use the "sandwich" technique where the supervisor gives an employee some good feedback, follows it with criticism, and then gives good feedback again. You don't want the criticism to be "sandwiched" in where it will leave the employee confused and wondering, "Am I doing well, or do I need improvement?" It is best to offer positive feedback and let it stand. And it is best when offering negative criticism to focus on helping the employee to understand the criticism.

Not Being Specific

Being specific tells the employee that you are taking the employee's job and performance seriously and gives that employee something tangible to work toward. Even if you have provided feedback all year, your employee may still have questions. If previously established goals need to remain as part of the appraisal, be sure you are prepared to explain to your employee why these goals have not been met within the last year. For example, your employee may have needed to reduce the number of personal phone calls she received during working hours. While the phone calls have lessened, the number (often, 5 calls per day) is still something she needs to reduce. You can be very specific about what you want to see and how you will both know when the objective is accomplished.

Lack of Clarity About Giver's Motives

When you sit down with your employee, be sure that you and your employee understand why you are there. Your purpose is primarily to review the performance during the last year and to offer guidance, through negotiating goals and objectives, for how your employee can improve or maintain his

performance in the future. If the situation permits, your goal during the appraisal is also to promote growth and advancement for your employee, which will also improve the hospital. Take another look at the page that contrasts purposes: individual, supervisor, and organizational. Make sure that there are no serious misunderstandings about your purposes.

Letting the Form Replace Clear Written Commentary

Many performance appraisals consist of only little check marks on an existing form. To be effective, some written comments specific to the individual need to be part of the written record of the appraisal. It takes time and thought to write clear, useful comments, but it is very important.

Letting the Written Commentary Replace an Honest, Open Discussion

An open, honest dialogue is equally as important as the written commentary during the appraisal. It is very important to put useful comments in writing, but it is just as important to disucss your comments and concerns with your employee. Even if you believe your written comments are clear, you need to be sure your employee understands the comments in the same way you do.

Letting the Appraisal Process Replace Good Communication

Too often we tell ourselves we are just too busy to take the time to concentrate on providing feedback to all of our employees. And why do we need to motivate the employees, can't they motivate themselves? We will just quickly take care of everything once a year and have it over and out of the way.

Good communication is only going to happen when you involve yourself with your employee throughout the year. There is no appraisal process that is going replace the reinforcement that is provided by feedback and motivation. This should be an on-going process that culminates in an appraisal.

During the appraisal, it is also important that you be aware of your body language and your listening skills. Hold the phone calls and interruptions. Relax. Encourage your employee to talk to you. Listen to what she has to say. This may be the only time she has to talk to you and provide you with helpful feedback. The appraisal is for both of you. You need to let your employee know what kind of a job she is doing, and she needs to let you know her concerns and satisfactions.

End the appraisal on a positive note There should have been no surprises and you both want to be in agreement about what has happened in the past year and what is going to happen in the next year. Agree in writing on the goals, objectives, or areas that need improvement. Establish the means for follow up to make sure the intended actions really happen.

Evaluating a Person Rather than Performance

This is a statement that we hope everyone assumes; however, it bears repeating. Each position within the hospital has a set of performance criteria associated with it, and each criterion should be measured with as much objectivity as we can provide. If we look at such standards as reliability, responsiveness, access, courtesy, and communication situations, we can begin to form a basis for appraising performance. Such standards can help prevent us from relying too much on generalities when we are evaluating performance.

Managing the Process Poorly

Appraisal time is a tense and anxious time for many employees. These feelings will only persist if the supervisor "puts it off" until the last minute and has little time to discuss performance with the employee. This can only lead to frustration. As we mentioned earlier, this may be the only time during the year that the employee has an opportunity to address his own concerns or just to sit, without interruption, and discuss his performance.

If you wait until there is not much time even your delivery will suffer because you haven't given yourself time to prepare. This is especially true for supervisors who have several employees to appraise. If you haven't kept any written records or if you haven't reviewed the employee's performance before meeting, you can't have a very high quality experience.

Some Good Practices

1. Consider having employees write a brief self-appraisal before you write the supervisory appraisal. They can state which goals and objectives they met in the previous 12 months, what they are proud of accomplishing, where they feel a need to improve, and what support they might need from the organization.

2. Consider keeping a file on each of your employees. Drop notes to yourself into the file during the year about good and bad things you observe or corrective conversations you have with that employee. If you do need to write a formal reprimand, keep a copy in the file. You will have evidence to help you when you sit down to do the appraisal. You will be much more specific and objective.

3. Consider some form of peer evaluation, where employees at the same level talk about goals and objectives, observe each other at work, and write brief performance appraisals. See if you can make it a positive, team-building effort.

4. Get your group together and talk about the performance appraisal process. Get their help in identifying problems with the way it is working. Brainstorm for creative solutions to some of the problems. Enlist their support and cooperation. View it as a team effort.

5.

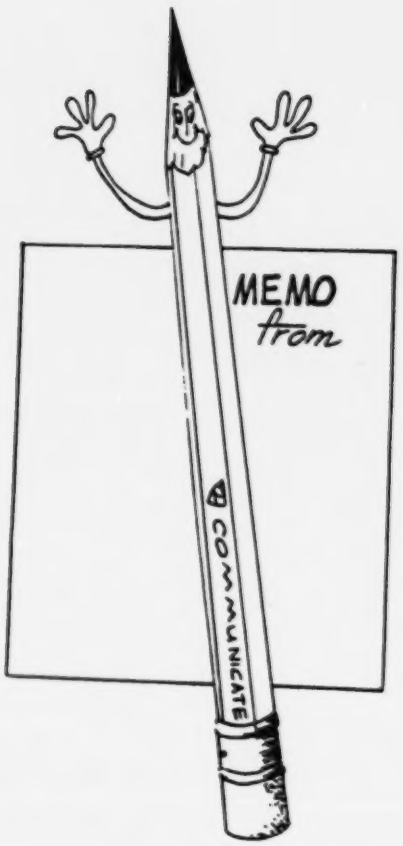
6.

7.

The Best Performance Appraisal

Identify below some of the best practices in performance appraisal. Think of this page as a promise to yourself about what you will try to do in the following year.

- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑
- ❑



The Appraisal Quiz

How well do you communicate on a supervisor/employee basis during the year? Look at the comments below and circle A for agree and D for disagree. If you are a supervisor circle what you think your employee(s) would answer.

A D 1. I can ask for help without feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable.

A D 2. My supervisor acknowledges the good things I do.

A D 3. I understand what my supervisor expects of me.

A D 4. My supervisor coaches me toward improvement when I need it.

A D 5. I have been informed of the major decisions my boss has made this year and I understand the reasons for them.

A D 6. My supervisor knows my personal goals.

A D 7. I know at least two things I can do to improve my performance.

A D 8. My supervisor lets me know where my weaknesses are without making me feel bad.

A D 9. I am able to disagree with my supervisor without it causing hard feelings.

A D 10. My supervisor and I set goals and objectives together.

A D 11. My supervisor is aware of the problems I cope with in my job.

A D 12. I feel comfortable suggesting changes in the way we do things.

Appraisal Categories at One Hospital

(These are the categories used by one hospital for performance appraisals. Note that this is not the entire form, only a list of the categories. Use this list to help you think about the evaluations you give or receive.)

1. JOB KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

A. Has a general knowledge of the general occupational field.

B. Experience and knowledge gained for a specific job.

C. Skills as applicable to the job description.

(In narrative, describe fields of special competence and, as appropriate, comment on developmental progress and needs in current job.)

2. JUDGMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING

A. Gets to the root of the problem and makes sound recommendations.

B. Foresees probable consequences of actions or recommendations.

C. Can analyze situations, determine issues, gather sufficient facts, weigh alternatives, and arrive at useful conclusions, for making recommendations.

D. Recognizes situations that supervisor should be consulted on or informed of.

3. RESPONSIBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

A. Can work with success independently.

B. Carries out assignments and follows through.

C. Understands opposing views or obstacles when assigned tasks.

D. Sees that necessary things get done.

E. Can be depended upon, in terms of presence on the job, punctuality, effective use of time.

F. Accepts responsibility.

4. COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

A. Speaks well: Organization of ideas, adapting to the listener and situation, clarity of expression.

B. Writes well: Writing is clear, correct, well organized, complete, appropriate.

Performance Categories at One Hospital, continued

5. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

A. Within the department, gets along with co-workers, is a good group worker, considers other points of view.

B. Outside the department, earns respect and cooperation of peers, management officials in other departments or other agencies or the general public.

C. Understands and respects the feelings of co-workers, patients and others.

6. ADAPTABILITY AND CREATIVITY

A. Adapts readily to changes in program direction or in procedures.

B. Displays creativity and originality in attaining work objectives.

C. Gives an extra portion when the job requires.

D. Seeks self improvement and professional growth.

7. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

A. Uses medical center equipment and supplies safely and economically.

B. Has knowledge of equipment used.

8. SAFETY

A. Demonstrates safe work habits.

B. Knows and adheres to the medical center safety procedures.

C. Is alert to safety hazards and takes initiative in getting them corrected.

SUMMARY

Additional facts, specific achievements, strengths, weaknesses, or suggested improvements not covered under previous items.

FOLLOW-UP PLANNED

Checklist for Appraisal Process

Below is a checklist you may want to copy and use throughout the year to help make sure you are staying on track and your performance appraisal becomes a tool that is as effective as possible. You may want to add some of your own thoughts to the list.

During the year

___Support my employee's effort to improve

___Provide feedback (positive, neutral, negative)

___Provide motivation

___Let employee know, in writing, how I feel about his/her job performance

___Make notes for employee's file to use during appraisal process

___Be clear in my directions

During the Appraisal

___View appraisal as an exchange of information, not a report card

___Make sure the employee and the supervisor share an understanding of the purpose for the appraisal

___Discuss one thing at a time. Don't "sandwich"

___Review past, analyze present, and plan future

___Concentrate on future

___Allow sufficient time without interruptions

___Encourage the employee to discuss concerns

___Use my communication skills and listen carefully

___Concentrate on performance or behavior, not personality

___Be positive with my conclusion

Effective Performance Appraisals
Teacher's Guide

Effective Performance Appraisals was developed by **Step *Ahead***: A Partnership for Improved Health Care Communication. **Step *Ahead*** was funded in large part by the U. S. Department of Education as a National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project. Our other partners include The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and seventeen hospitals within the State of New Mexico.

As a demonstration project, we are eager to share these materials with others who are engaged in not-for-profit literacy work. If you are a for-profit organization, we can sell these matierals to you for training classes. If you would like to use our materials, please write for permission to:

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our partner organizations and especially wish to thank the dedicated healthcare workers who helped make **Step *Ahead*** a success..

May 10, 1994

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Dr. Stephen A. Bernhardt and Dr. Paul R. Meyer, Co-Directors

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Introduction

Effective Performance Appraisals is a course in supervisory performance appraisal skills developed especially for hospital employees. It is designed to be taught on-site and to complement a hospital's other training and staff development efforts. The topical focus is workplace communication. The emphasis is on appraisal of employees, but the communication skills associated with appraisals are valuable in a variety of situations.

Effective Performance Appraisals is designed as a 6-hour workshop, with two three-hour sessions, or one long session. The course is a response to requests for help from hospital employees with a very difficult communication process. In many work settings, performance appraisals do more harm than good, yet organizations continue to use them. This course attempts to help supervisors understand the process and use it in a healthy, open, productive manner.

The course is intended to serve healthcare workers in many areas: nursing, dietary, housekeeping, patient accounts, lab, x-ray, administrative, and other areas. It will be most useful to those who are supervisors or team leaders or those who anticipate taking on these duties in the near future, but it is also useful as a refresher for experienced supervisors or for anyone interested in the communication demands on supervisors who are responsible for employee evaluations. Teachers of the course are encouraged to adapt the course to various mixes of these audiences.

This teacher's guide is intended to aid teachers of the course, both those teaching for **Step *Ahead*** and others who may be using our materials. It explains the philosophy of the course, offers sample lesson plans, and describes how teachers can adapt the course to make it more work-related and more responsive to different audiences.

Effective Performance Appraisals was developed by Ann Wallace, Bruce Farmer, and Stephen A. Bernhardt of New Mexico State University as part of **Step *Ahead***, a Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education. **Step *Ahead*** develops and offers short courses in basic skills to employees in New Mexico hospitals. Courses focus on reading, writing, oral communication, supervisory communication, and presentation skills. **Step *Ahead*** also works with the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy and local literacy groups to establish workplace-related tutoring efforts on site in various workplaces.

Philosophy of Effective Performance Appraisals

Effective Performance Appraisals is based on the premise that supervision demands different oral and written communication skills and work skills than those required for front line employees. We believe that improving supervisors' communication skills benefits a hospital, its employees, and its patients. If supervisors understand the appraisal process and communicate that process to front line employees, then both the employees and the organization work smarter. A working appraisal process results in better morale, improved teamwork, and increased efficiency. Better communication skills can help supervisors in their positions, make their work more pleasant and less frustrating, and improve their chances for advancement within the hospital. Enhanced communication also directly improves patient care. It reduces risk and prevents costly misunderstandings and mistakes.

Effective Performance Appraisals focuses on helping participants develop effective means for interacting with others in a supervisory role through the process of appraising their own employees. It stresses the need for supervisors to recognize that a performance appraisal is a yearlong communication process and not something that happens for thirty minutes, once each year. The workshop also emphasizes the need to address issues directly as they arise, to recognize the needs of employees, and to coach employees in a direction that is beneficial to them and to the hospital, and in a way that will provide positive communication.

Effective Performance Appraisals is based upon communication theory and management theory. The course emphasizes that supervisors need to be able to recognize and understand particular communication situations and encourages supervisors to use effective speaking and listening skills as they discuss goals and objectives with their employees. The course also addresses the importance of understanding motivational needs of employees and communicating a willingness on the part of the supervisory staff to meet these needs. Participants learn to recognize clearly stated performance objectives and practice writing measurable, observable goal statements. The concept of communicating effective feedback is addressed through class discussion and role plays. As participants discuss these skills with the teacher and among themselves and become more comfortable with them, they will be introduced to scenarios supervisors are likely to encounter where these skills can be practiced.

The workshop provides an important opportunity for employees in different parts of the organization to share perspectives and gather ideas from each other. It is a means for getting supervisors to exchange past experience and to recognize the importance of communication with their employees.

Effective Performance Appraisals uses lecture, class discussion, and writing worksheets to help students enhance their supervisory and evaluation skills.

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The course is meant to be active and interactive, with students asking questions, contributing situations and problems from their workplace, and bringing to the table issues that affect them on a daily basis. We rely on collaborative discussion of many of the situations as potential solutions to drive much of the learning in the classroom. We also rely on the value of networking with other supervisors as a means to solve problems or get new ideas.

Effective Performance Appraisals was tested and revised in several hospital settings. People from various job areas have taken the course and provided us with valuable insights and examples from their own experience. We continue to use their valuable feedback in revising the workshop and making it more relevant to their jobs.

Course Goals

Participant Goals

Effective Performance Appraisals is designed to improve the supervisory skills of participants as they relate to the performance appraisal process. Specific goals are listed on page 1 of the coursebook. Participants should be encouraged to add goals for themselves. This will provide guidance for tailoring the workshop to the particular mix of participants.

Participants should improve their ability and willingness to perform employee appraisals. They should be able to articulate specific strategies for making the appraisal process constructive. They should demonstrate the ability to write specific, measurable objectives for employee performance. They should also feel that they have benefited from the workshop. Instructors should pay close attention to course evaluations to see whether participant goals are being met and should revise their teaching methods as evaluations indicate and in a way that is reasonable.

Instructor Role

Effective Performance Appraisals is best taught by a team of two instructors: a lead instructor and an assistant. Two teachers can do a more thorough job of covering and presenting their own experiences with employees. This is also a primary way of developing new teachers. Assistants learn how to teach the course by working with an experienced teacher. Two teachers also provide interest for the students, and the differing perspectives between the two teachers about particular issues can lead to productive class discussions. In our project, we used team teaching to develop training expertise among hospital staff so the workshops could continue once our funded project ended.

For this course, it is imperative that the teachers have some supervisory or management experience. Without this experience, it will be difficult for the team to establish the credibility they need with the class. We have found that most classes will test the teachers on their experience; students may lose interest if the material can't be grounded in practical experience.

Teachers should try to get each participant to identify appraisal problems in his or her work area and discuss them in class and try out the solutions on the job.

Teachers should also maintain good records. They should make sure to administer and collect course evaluations.

Instructors need to convey enthusiasm and belief in the worth and the potential of the employees who attend the class. Many of the outcomes of our instruction have to do with self-confidence in handling difficult employees, lessened anxiety about supervising and appraising others, and the belief that good communication is possible and something to work toward, even with difficult employees. The course should lead to positive feelings toward others and

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toward the hospital, and a sense that improvement is possible through teamwork. We are helping people gain very important skills. We need to do so in ways that are sensitive to the anxieties of adult learners.

Teachers should act in ways that reflect the best interests of the hospital. They should resist participants' inclinations to engage in damaging personal gossip, and they should encourage participants to act in ways that support the best interests of the hospital. In communication skills classes, information always arises that could be damaging to other workers, to the hospital, or to the relation of hospital to community. In such situations, the privacy and interests of the workers and of the hospital should be balanced and protected. It is the teacher's job to keep the class talk professional and productive. No good purpose is served by criticizing a fellow worker with loose talk in class.

Instructors should be personable and animated, displaying a good sense of humor and a genuine interest in the students' well being. Instructors should be professional. Instructors should dress professionally, use professional language, and exercise professional decorum.

Evaluation

For program evaluation purposes, a single evaluation questionnaire is usually used. Participants can fill out a course evaluation form specifically targeted at what they learned in the **Effective Performance Appraisals**. A careful reading of the evaluation can sometimes provide ideas for improving course delivery the next time the coure is taught. Be sure to know what the situation is and be prepared to administer required evaluations.

Sample Daily Lesson Plans

The following lesson plan is provided as an aid to help teachers plan and budget class time. Each lesson plan has a brief narrative description of class activities and goals and a time plan. Each plan assumes a three-hour class session from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Typically, the workshop will be team taught. The team should meet before class and decide who has leadership responsibility for each activity. Some activities work well if one person writes at the board or on a flip chart while the other fields input from the class. Teachers should adapt these lesson plans to their own situations.

Day 1

The first class is designed to introduced participants to the course and its instructors and to get participants to think about and understand how the appraisal process is used in various departments of the hospital. It is also a time to get students introduced to each other and comfortable with each other so that later class discussion and interaction will be easier to achieve. This is also a time to begin to introduce the concept of separating issues of pay from issues of performance appraisal.

8:45	Instructors arrive. Get attendance sheets. Set up room. Make sure the overhead works, that there is chalk, pens, or whatever is needed. Greet and talk with students as they arrive.
9:00-9:10	Introduce yourself and give a brief overview of your organization and your background.
9:10-9:25	Ask the participants to introduce themselves and tell what department or unit they represent. Ask them how many employees they supervise. Review the material that will be covered. You can go over the ***Table of Contents*** to give them an idea of what the workshop is about.
9:30-9:40	Review ***Goals of the Course*** (p. 2) Ask participants to write 1 or 2 additional goals they have for the course. Explain that the beginning exercises are to determine what perceptions and procedures they share about the performance appraisal process. Let them know that you want interaction, sharing of information, and exchange of ideas.

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9:40-10:00 ***Look at Appraisal Scenarios*** (p. 3). Have participants review these in groups and then discuss them. If you have time at the end of the workshop, go back and review these--would the responses be the same?

10:00-10:20 ***Purposes*** (p. 4). Work again in groups. What are their perceptions of the appraisal process? Work with the idea that there are multiple and conflicting purposes. Do participants share the same ideas about the purpose(s) for an appraisal? Two important purposes are: 1) to maintain or improve the performance an employee is demonstrating and 2) to promote individual advancement for an employee and the organization.

10:20-10:30 ***Responsibilities*** (p. 5). What are the responsibilities of givers and receivers during the appraisal? Remind them that they, too, receive an appraisal and to keep that in mind as they go through these exercises and answer questions. What does the group think of writing the appraisal together with the employee if that is possible? What about peer review?

BREAK

10:40-10:55 ***Flowcharting*** (p. 6). Have each person take 5-10 minutes to chart the appraisal process from the day after an appraisal has been given by the supervisor throughout the year until the next appraisal is conducted. Compare individual responses with those of others in the group. Use this as a time to discuss and sum up how people are likely to have different views of the process. This would be a good time to have the class look at the organization's policy manual. Have them discuss their perceptions of the process and compare their processes with the written policy. How do their own processes follow stated policy?

10:55-11:10 ***Policy vs Reality*** (p. 7) Discuss how well the policies of the hospital reflect reality. Can the appraisal process meet more closely the policy? This is a good time for sharing how different departments handle their policy-related issues during the appraisal.

11:10-11:30 ***Goals and Objectives*** (p. 8). Look at questions most people ask. Note that most of these pertain to the future. However, before you can begin to discuss the future you need to be prepared to review the past year. The R-A-P model can help you prepare for and conduct the appraisal.

11:30-12:00 Define ***goals and objectives*** (p. 9). This may take some time to understand, but it is a valuable part of the class. Be patient and make sure the class understands that objectives are **specific, measurable**, and **attainable**. Do exercises (as a group) on p. 10. Talk about those goals and objectives that require a little extra attention. Instead of labeling them 'developmental needs' call them 'opportunities for improvement.' Take p.11 home (or to lunch) and do these. Emphasize the importance of understanding the differences between goals and objectives and spend time practicing and reviewing writing them clearly.

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Day 2

This class session will be used primarily to discuss motivation and feedback. It will also address appraisal issues that have arisen and how supervisors have addressed these issues before. It is important to stress throughout these exercises and discussion that the appraisal process is an **on-going** communication process throughout the year. Watch your time carefully. This session goes by quickly because discussion begins to pick up.

9:00-9:20 Review and discuss answers from assignment on p. 11 (specific, measurable, attainable). Use the overhead or flipchart to put some of the participants' objectives in front of the group.

9:20-10:00 ***Motivating Employees*** (p. 12). Have participants rank order the list at the bottom of this page. Talk about extrinsic and intrinsic needs. How can supervisors develop a relationship with their employees that will allow them to know what motivates each employee and how those specific needs might be met? Review ways to motivate on p. 13.

Answer questions on p. 14. Do the answers address extrinsic or intrinsic needs. Are they attainable? Remind your supervisors that what they identify that motivates them may be the same factors that motivate their employees. There are no right or wrong answers to these ratings.

10:00-10:10 Review ***Performance Appraisal and Quality Initiatives*** (p. 15). How do these statements apply to the quality management or continuous improvement philosophies in place in this hospital?

Have the class review ***Performance Appraisals and Pay Issues*** (p. 16). Perhaps they can agree that if ranking is not going to be important for any reason during the appraisal it should be omitted.

10:10-10:35 Review ***Providing Feedback*** (pp. 17-18). Stress that feedback provides reinforcement and that feedback, whether positive, neutral, or negative is better than not receiving any feedback at all. It can be an effective communication tool. Review the questions on page 18.

Look at the exercise on page 19. Ask the group to review this and put answers on a flip chart.

BREAK

10:45-11:15 Move on to ***Common Problems*** (pp. 20-22). Spend some time on the problems involved with giving an appraisal that is too lenient and why this might happen. Stress the importance of motivation and feedback here. If this has been an on-going process all year, there will be no surprises during the appraisal and therefore the occasion for an appraisal that my be too lenient should not arise.

11:15-11:35 Look at ***Some Good Practices*** (p. 23). Can the group think of any others they could add? Page 24 offers them an opportunity to make notes to themselves right away about what they will try to do in the coming year.

11:35-11:50 Have them fill out the ***Appraisal Quiz*** on p. 25 as believe their employees would answer. If all answers were 'A' the score is 12 and they can consider themselves just about perfect as supervisors; 9-11 is good; 7-9 is about average; 6 or less indicates a need for improvement.

11:50-12:00 Thank them for their active participation. Tell them how much you have enjoyed working with them. Have them fill out a course evaluation.

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Customizing the course

- Do what you feel is helpful for the participants. Encourage them to bring up examples of communication situations involving performance evaluations from their own workplaces or previous positions. Work in a discussion of their specific problems, but avoid naming names or discussing too much in-depth personal information.
- Encourage interaction: be a friend to the students. Develop a good, friendly, atmosphere in class. Do everything you can to create a comfort zone for good communication.
- Use praise liberally and criticism judiciously. Try to make plenty of positive comments. Highlight what people do well. Stress the importance of writing within a communication setting, especially as it pertains to peoples goals and objectives. Show them when they do well and understand the concepts. Work with them when they need help.
- Encourage people to discuss their experiences: what is communication like in their jobs? What is most difficult? What misunderstandings have happened and how might they have been avoided? Encourage them to describe situations where conversations went particularly well. Encourage them to share their communication strategies—even if they differ with those of the course. Be open to ideas. Take notes about good ideas. Share your experiences with them.
- If you encounter an especially good communicator, make a note of that person. Consider asking her to come talk to a future class.
- Getting good work from busy people is a challenge. Your role is to persuade, cajole, pressure, encourage, and praise people for doing the assignments, reading the readings, participating energetically.
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Record Keeping

- Keep good daily records of attendance. Work out the recording methods with the hospital coordinator.
- Provide the **Step *Ahead*** project with an evaluation summary. Attached to the summary should be the dates the course was offered, the location of the course, and the names and corresponding departments of your participants.
- Keep up with the course. Return descriptions of communication situations that people turn in. Include positive comments and a note of thanks.
- Keep notes on how the course goes. If there is too much to accomplish, figure out how to get back on track. Let us know if you think we expect too much on one day and not enough on the other. Let us know about errors in the materials, unforeseen problems, or areas we could improve.

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